

CHAPTER 2

**ORGANIZATION OF THE
PLATOON AND SQUAD****Section I. THE PLATOON****2-1. GENERAL**

The platoon is a basic combat unit capable of maneuvering in the conduct of combat operations. The platoon can fight as part of a pure mechanized infantry company or as part of a company team that is task organized with tank platoons and mechanized infantry platoons. In either case, the platoon can establish a base of fire and then move other elements to seek an advantageous position from which to destroy or dislocate the enemy.

On the battlefield, the platoon can expect rapid and frequent movement. It must be prepared to fight in a variety of situations — both mounted and dismounted — while attacking or defending, during movement, and under conditions where nuclear and chemical weapons have been used. The platoon operates in such a way as to make maximum use of its weapons and available firepower.

Figure 2-1. PLATOON WEAPONS

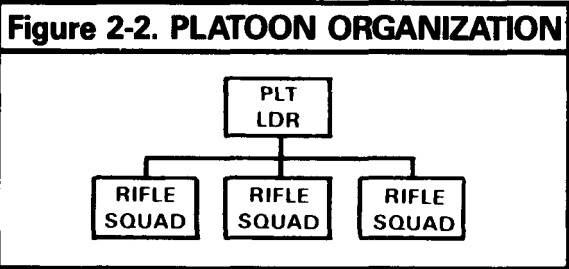
WEAPON	RANGE	PRIMARY TARGET
Caliber .50 machine gun	1,600 meters	Infantry, light vehicles
Dragon LAW	1,000 meters	Tank, BMP
M60 machine gun	200 meters	Tank, BMP
	1,100 meters	Infantry, light vehicles
Squad automatic weapon	1,000 meters	Infantry
M203 dual-purpose weapon	350 meters	Infantry
M16A1 rifle	460 meters	Infantry

CONTENTS	PAGE
Section I. The Platoon	2-1
II. The Squad	2-3
III. Control and Organization for Mounted Operations	2-8
IV. Control and Organization for Dismounted Operations	2-9

2-2. PLATOON ORGANIZATION

The mechanized infantry platoon is equipped with four APCs. It is organized with a platoon headquarters and three rifle squads. The platoon leader and his headquarters are mounted in one APC, and the squads are mounted in the other three.

A typical mechanized infantry platoon is organized as shown in illustration.

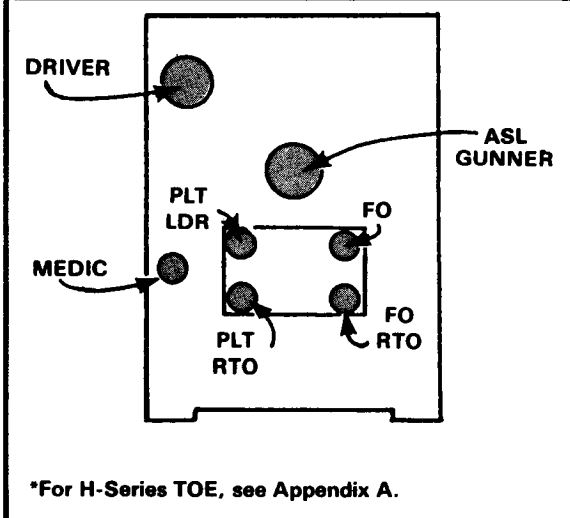


The platoon headquarters is organized as shown in illustration.



A typical seating arrangement for the platoon headquarters is shown in figure 2-4.

Figure 2-4. PLATOON HEADQUARTERS SEATING.*

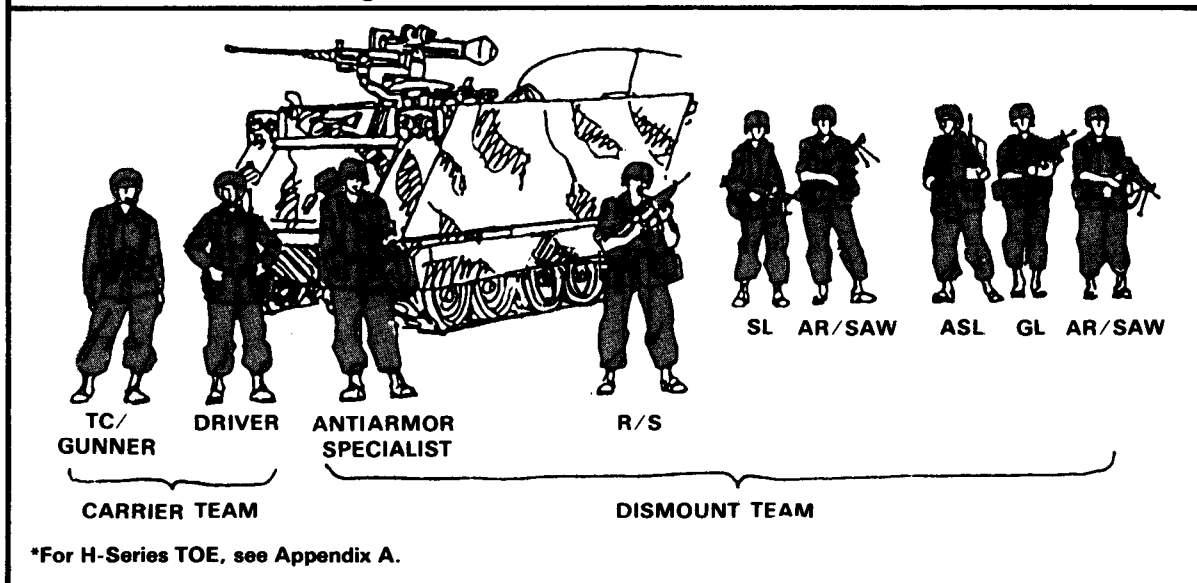


Section II. THE SQUAD

2-3. GENERAL

The squad is composed of the APC and nine men organized into two teams: the carrier team and the dismount team.

Figure 2-5. SQUAD ORGANIZATION.*

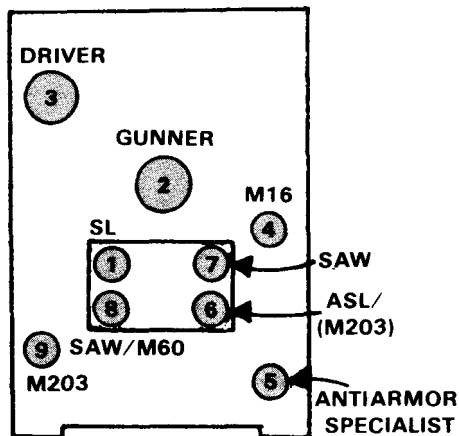


As a minimum, the **carrier team** is normally composed of the team leader/gunner and the driver.

The **dismount team** is made up of all squad members not a part of the carrier team. The platoon leader normally specifies the organization of the dismount team. His decision is usually based on squad strength, mission, enemy terrain, and guidance from the company commander.

A typical seating arrangement for a squad in the APC is shown in illustration.

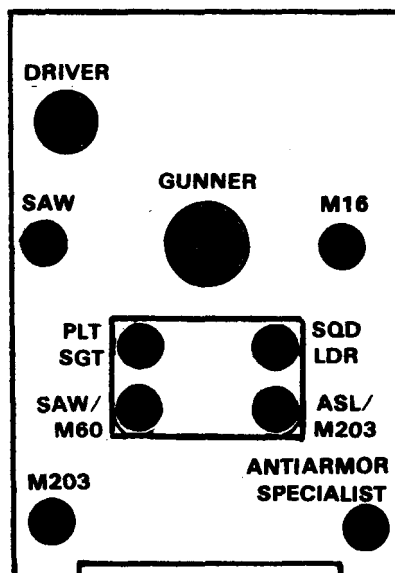
Figure 2-6. SQUAD SEATING ARRANGEMENT (EXAMPLE). *



*For H-Series TOE, see Appendix A.

The squad with the platoon sergeant on board its APC will have a typical seating arrangement as shown in illustration.

Figure 2-7. SQUAD (WITH PLATOON SERGEANT) SEATING. *



*For H-Series TOE, see Appendix A.

2-4. SQUAD RESPONSIBILITIES

Each squad is arranged in its vehicle so it can observe in all directions and deliver sustained, effective fire while moving, or rapidly exit the dismount team from the vehicle when required to accomplish dismounted tasks. Each squad member has certain duties and responsibilities based on his duty position in the squad. Each squad member's basic weapon, duties, and responsibilities are outlined below.

Squad leader, M16A1 rifle:

Has overall responsibility for the squad. While conducting mounted operations, the squad leader designates targets, selects routes of movement, selects vehicle positions, determines weapons to be fired, issues fire commands for all weapons, communicates with the platoon leader, and reacts to the platoon leader's commands. For dismounted operations, the squad leader has the option of remaining with

the vehicle or deploying with the dismount team. The choice is based upon the **platoon leader's desires or squad leader's judgment** of the tactical situation.

Is expected to place himself wherever his leadership and experience best influence the most important actions of the squad. The squad leader has to decide how best to utilize the carrier team and the dismount team. Normally, if the dismount team has to dismount, the dismount role is the most important, and the squad leader will dismount and lead it.

Team leader/grunner, caliber .50 machine gun/M16A1 rifle:

Observes the battlefield to detect enemy targets and to be aware of location of friendly forces.

Controls the movement of the vehicle under the direction of the squad leader.

Operates the caliber .50 machine gun as directed by the squad leader.

Is responsible for operator maintenance of the caliber .50 machine gun.

Serves as carrier team leader and positions the carrier when the squad leader has dismounted with the dismount team.

Driver, M16A1 rifle:

Drives the vehicle under squad leader's/team leader's/gunner's control.

Follows correct terrain-driving procedures and assists in selecting hull-down positions.

Aids in detecting targets and observing rounds fired.

Is primarily responsible for operator maintenance on vehicle. (Other squad members help the driver as directed by the squad leader.)

M16A1 rifleman/sniper:

Normally operates as part of the dismount team.

If employed, assists the M60 machine gunner once the machine gun is placed in the ground mount role.

Antiarmor specialist, Dragon/M16A1 rifle:

Normally operates as a part of the dismount team.

Is armed with a Dragon antiarmor weapon or, when not firing the Dragon, fights as a rifleman armed with an M16A1 rifle.

Assistant squad leader, M203 dual-purpose weapon: Normally operates as part of the dismount team and is one of the team leaders for, the dismount team. He will control the dismount team when the squad leader remains mounted.

Squad automatic rifleman, squad automatic weapon (SAW): Normally operates as part of the dismount team.

Squad automatic rifleman, SAW: Normally operates as part of the dismount team.

Grenadier, M203 dual-purpose weapon: Normally operates as part of the, dismount team.

Machine gunner: Although the M60 machine gun does not have a dedicated gunner

assigned, the weapon is available for use by the squad. It may be used in several ways:

In the defense to make use of its heavy firepower in final protective fires when used with a tripod and T&E mechanism and in areas that offer a dismounted avenue of approach into the position.

In the offense when the terrain does not allow a large maneuvering element but does allow a base-of-fire element to place effective fire on the objective area. Frequently, the capacity of the objective area, or the routes leading to it, does not allow the necessary space to employ the optimum number of troops to maneuver against it. The adding of the M60 to the base of fire will partially offset the problem by adding to the overall combat power.

In any situation that offers a significant air threat.

During movement, the M60 machine gun may be affixed to the side of the APC for overwatch purposes and may be left in place, allowing the gunner to deploy, for example, dismounted with a fully loaded SAW.

2-5. UNDERSTRENGTH PLATOONS AND SQUADS

Platoons and squads will not always be at full strength. Even so, the mission (in combat and in training) can still be accomplished if understrength units are organized with these rules in mind:

Keep key leadership positions filled. Always maintain a chain of command — platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and squad leaders.

Man the most potent weapons first. Take full advantage of available firepower. Before each mission, carefully consider how to employ Dragons, machine guns, and automatic rifles.

The platoon must have a plan of organization for use when it does not have all four APCs. Since two full-strength squads cannot ride on

one vehicle, cross-loading of men and equipment, from a disabled or missing APC, among all of the platoon's remaining APCs must be accomplished. Normally, the squad leader of the missing APC rides with the platoon leader. This arrangement has two advantages: the squad leader can follow the operation, and he can get orders from the platoon leader. The platoon leader's APC also serves as the point on which the squad members assemble if the dismount elements deploy from the APCs. Depending on the location and condition of a disabled vehicle and the tactical situation, the platoon leader may choose to leave the driver and gunner with the vehicle to secure it and oversee its recovery and repair. An understrength squad might be organized as shown in illustration.

Squads of five to seven men are common. Before employing such understrength squads, key factors must be considered.

The mission may take longer to accomplish

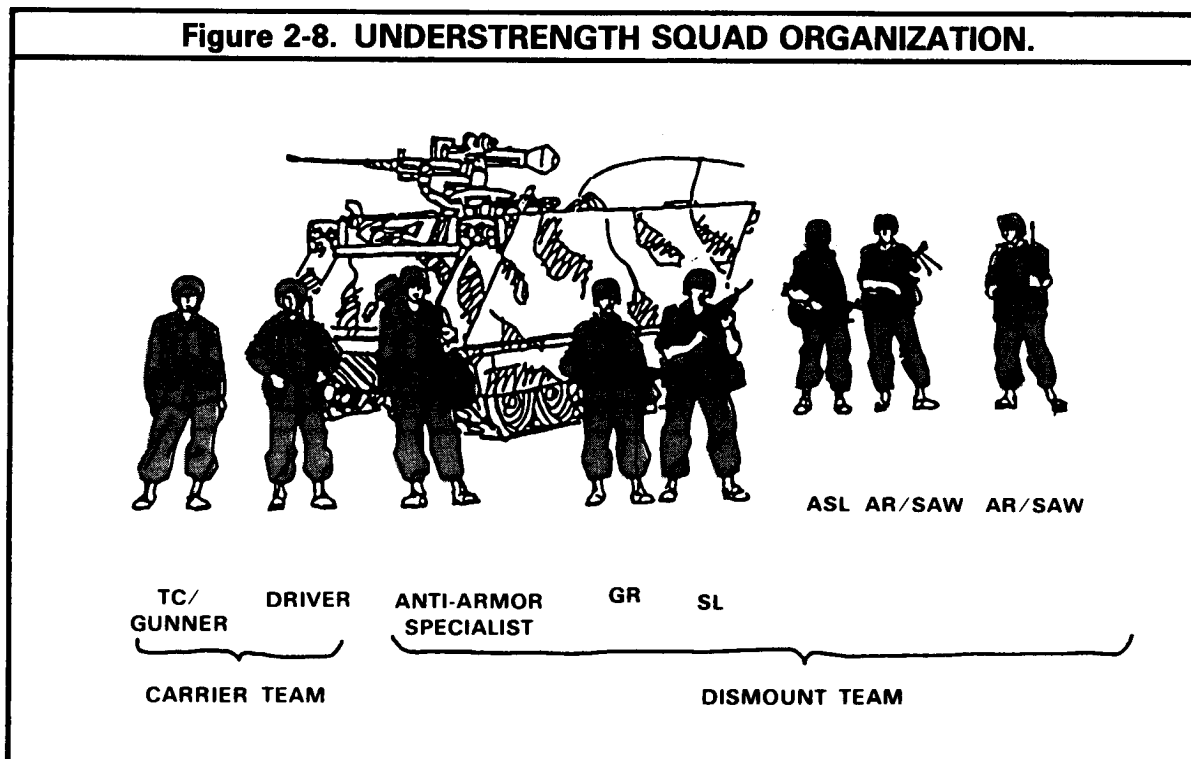
whether tactical, maintenance, or administrative.

The mission may require two squads to accomplish it rather than one.

Extensive individual training needs to be emphasized since all members of the squad must become familiar with all squad weapons.

A squad of six men may still man key weapon systems and enable the unit to put sufficient firepower on the enemy to be effective. A five-man squad will have difficulty in manning weapon systems key to the dismount element, and producing the firepower necessary to accomplish the mission. Squad frontages are severely reduced in defensive situations to the point where the combining of squads to produce two nearly full squads may be more beneficial than trying to maintain three understrength squads. In any situation, the factors of mission, enemy terrain, troops available, and time (METT-T) must be carefully weighed to produce the best possible use of understrength squads.

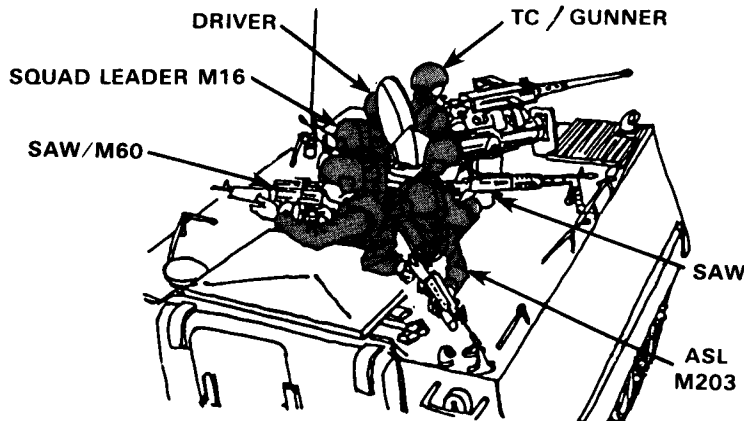
Figure 2-8. UNDERSTRENGTH SQUAD ORGANIZATION.



A general priority order in which positions are to be filled (from the most important to the least important) is squad leader, driver, team leader/gunner, Dragon gunner, SAWs, grenadier, rifleman. Depending on the squad/platoon leader's

estimate of the situation, the M60 machine gun may be manned in priority after the Dragon gunner. A typical seating arrangement for a six-man squad is shown in illustration.

Figure 2-9. UNDERSTRENGTH SQUAD SEATING.



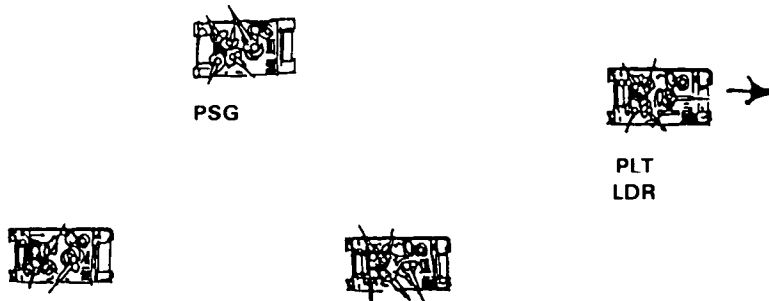
Section III. CONTROL AND ORGANIZATION FOR MOUNTED OPERATIONS

2-6. GENERAL

The platoon moves and fights mounted whenever possible. When all of the platoon remains mounted, it fights as a single force under the control of the platoon leader. At times, when mounted, the platoon leader may choose to divide the platoon into two sections of two APCs each-for

example, when using bounding overwatch. The platoon sergeant will control one section, while the platoon leader controls the other; however, the platoon leader retains overall control of the platoon. If contact is not likely, the platoon leader may choose to lead the formation.

Figure 2-10. MOUNTED PLATOON.



2-7. CARRIER MOVEMENT CONTROL

Each squad leader controls the movement of his vehicle in consonance with the platoon leader's vehicle. The team leader/gunner insures that his vehicle has the correct caliber .50 machine gun

orientation and that the vehicle is properly dispersed in accordance with the formation being used. (Formations and movement techniques are discussed in chapter 4.)

Section IV. CONTROL AND ORGANIZATION FOR DISMOUNTED OPERATIONS

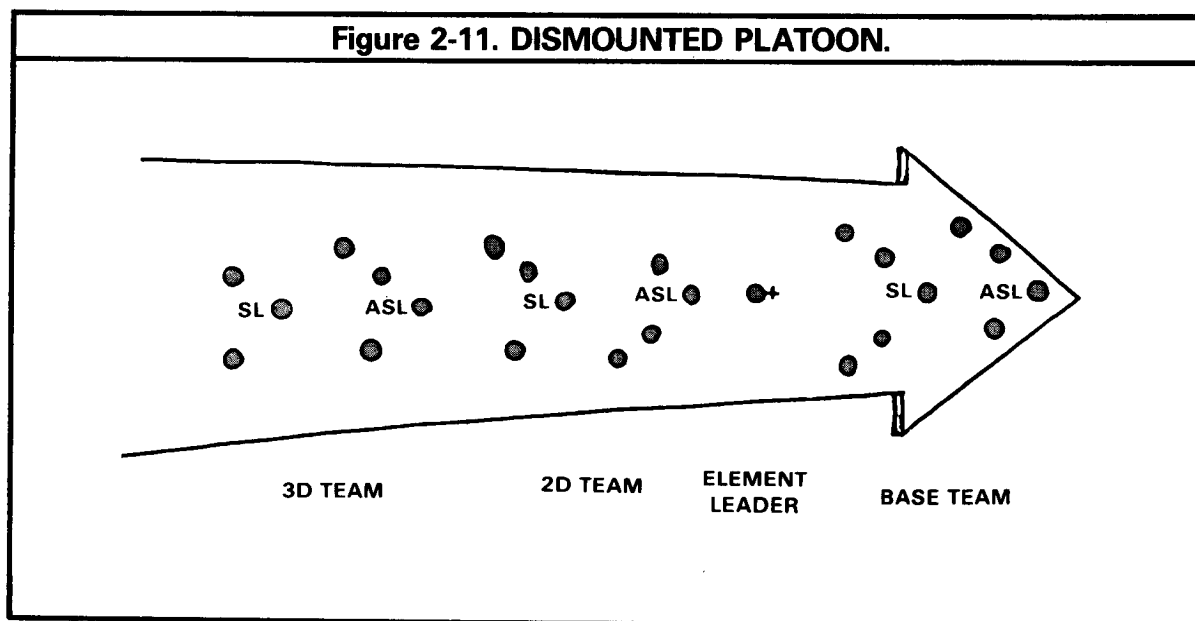
2-8. CONTROL OF THE PLATOON

Each APC carries a dismount team of infantrymen whose purpose is to fight dismounted. When the dismount teams are deployed, there are methods of maintaining control over the squads and platoon. These two methods have a direct bearing on how the platoon is organized.

In the first method, the carrier team and dismount team remain under the control of their

squad leader. The squad leader directs the movement and fires of both teams. Because this method is a challenge for the squad leader to control, it requires the carrier team to be close to the dismount team. This method may be used when the enemy, visibility, or terrain dictates the use of the dismount team to secure or lead the carrier team.

Figure 2-11. DISMOUNTED PLATOON.



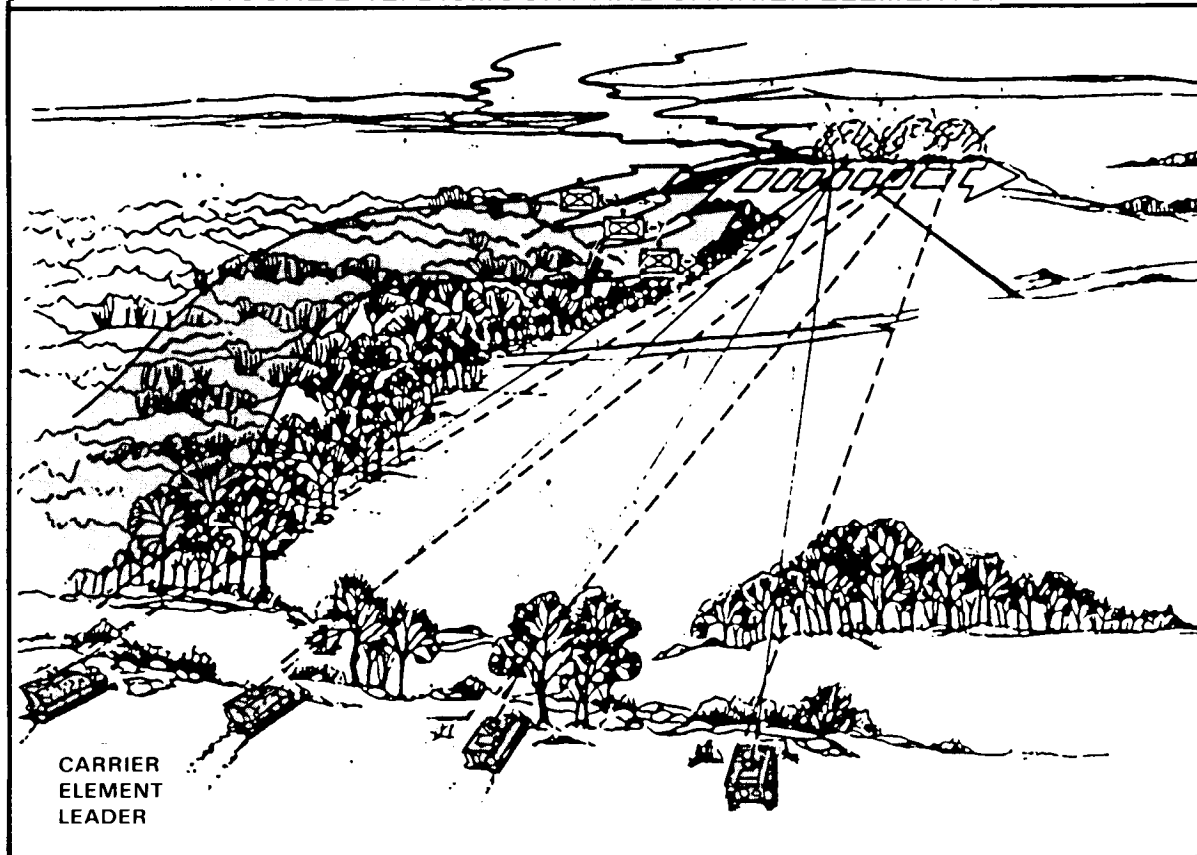
In the second method, the dismount teams and carrier teams are organized into a **dismount element and carrier element**. The three dismount teams compose the dismount element, and the four vehicles (includes headquarters vehicle) compose the carrier element. Thus, the platoon is organized into two ele-

ments. One element is controlled by the platoon leader and the other by the platoon sergeant. This method is commonly used whenever the vehicles and dismounted infantry are separated. For example, the carrier element may be employed at one location to maximize use of its weapons, while the dismount element is in an-

other. These different locations do not have to be far apart in fact it could be a matter of only 50 to 100 meters.

Whichever method is used, the platoon leader retains overall control of the platoon.

FIGURE 2-12. DISMOUNT AND CARRIER ELEMENTS.



2-9. OPERATIONS

The platoon leader might order the dismount teams to dismount to:

- Operate in terrain that restricts the movement of APCs, such as in forests or built-up areas.

- Obtain better observation and fires whenever those of the APC are restricted.

- Continue the operation whenever the APC is under effective antiarmor fires.

- Assault or clear an objective.

- Move on a different route while APCs support.

- Defend dismounted.

- Clear an obstacle or danger area.

- Take advantage of the mutual support of squad weapons such as Dragons.

- Provide security.

- Conduct dismounted patrols.

When the dismount team dismounts, the team leader/gunner and driver remain with the

vehicle, while the squad leader normally dismounts.

Before the dismount team dismounts, the squad leader should decide what weapons are to be taken. His decision is based on the tactical situation, that is, is the purpose antiarmor, anti-infantry, or a combination. If the purpose is anti-infantry, there may not be a need to dismount the Dragon/LAWs.

When making the decision to dismount, and in the absence of orders from the platoon leader, the squad leader considers where his presence is required. Specifically, if the situation requires dismounted action, then the squad leader will be dismounted. The squad leader will normally dismount with his dismount team to:

Operate in terrain that restricts the movement of the APC, such as in forests or built-up areas.

Avoid effective antiarmor fires.

Move on a different route while the APC supports.

Clear an obstacle or danger area.

Assault or clear an objective.

Defend dismounted.

Conduct dismounted patrols.

There are other instances in which all or only a portion of the dismount team may dismount. For example, the squad leader may choose not to dismount, but the assistant squad leader would dismount to lead the dismount team to:

Operate whenever the observation and fires of the APCs are restricted by visibility or terrain.

Provide security.

Take advantage of the mutual support of the other squad weapons such as the Dragon.